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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2594

January 22, 1993

Mike Espy, former Member of Congress (D-2nd MS), is the 25th U.S. secretary of agriculture. At his Senate confirmation hearings Espy said among the actions he plans for the Department are: placing major emphasis on expanding U.S. exports; improving rural development efforts; and increasing farm income.

Photo by Byron Schumaker.



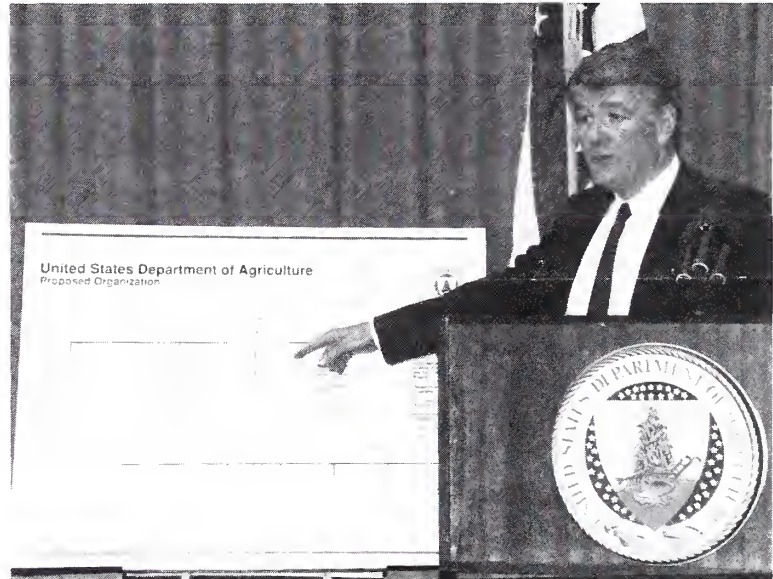
FOOD A REAL BARGAIN -- Food prices in 1993 are expected to increase at a slower rate than inflation. "The Consumer Price Index for all food is expected to increase two to four percent above last year's levels," says Bill Thomas, an Extension Service economist at the University of Georgia. The cost of processing and distributing food increased two percent in 1992, while the farm value of food declined 2.4 percent. Consumer demand for ready-to-serve food items declined last year. "Instead of buying ready prepared foods, consumers have been buying more basic ingredients to prepare meals at home," Thomas says. **Contact: Bill Thomas (706) 542-9081.**

PILOT WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM -- USDA has tentatively accepted 49,888 acres into the Pilot Wetlands Reserve Program. The pilot program is being conducted in nine states, and can accept only 50,000 acres at a total cost of \$46.4 million. Farmers and ranchers had submitted 466,000 acres. The producers are selling permanent easements to USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service to restore land to productive wetland habitat. USDA will pay landowners for the acreage covered by the easement and up to 75 percent of the needed restoration costs to ensure that wetland conditions prevail. States in the pilot program are California, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, and Wisconsin. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

WINTER VEGETABLE ACREAGE -- 1993 winter crop fresh market vegetable acreage is estimated at 187,900 acres, up 2 percent from a year ago. More acres were planted to snap beans, carrots, cauliflower, sweet corn bell peppers, and tomatoes. **Contact: Arvin Budge (202) 720-4285.**

COSTS DECLINE -- Now there's a headline. Under a formula set by Congress the grazing fee for Western public lands administered by USDA's Forest Service, and the Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management, will decline by six cents. The new fee is \$1.86 per animal unit, down from \$1.92. An animal unit month is the amount of forage needed per month to sustain one cow and her calf, one horse, or five sheep and goats. The annually adjusted fee goes into effect March 1, 1993. **Contact: Pamela Finney (202) 205-1584.**

Proposed restructuring of USDA was announced by Secretary Madigan at a news conference on January 19, 1993. The proposal includes eliminating 1,191 field offices, and reorganizing the USDA headquarters management structure by reducing 26 operating agencies to 13, and reducing 14 subcabinet officials to 4 undersecretaries.
USDA photo by Byron Schumaker.



PREDICTING SOIL EROSION -- The formula used by USDA to predict soil loss has been revised. The universal soil loss equation, the primary tool used in conservation planning worldwide will now use more specific information than the old version on rainfall, seasonal changes, and factors such as crop growth, crop residue cover, surface roughness, and soil moisture. The revision makes the equation more accurate, and will help conservation agencies and farmers control soil erosion. **Contact: Kenneth Renard (602) 670-6481.**

OREGON FREE OF BOVINE BRUCELLOSIS -- Oregon now joins 31 other states that have eradicated bovine brucellosis. The infectious and contagious bacterial disease affects cattle and bison. Humans can get the disease by drinking unpasteurized milk from infected animals or by handling infected animals. **Contact: Kendra Pratt (301)**

WHAT CHOLESTEROL? -- People who are 100 years old or older are twice as likely as other elderly consumers to drink whole milk and eat real butter and ice cream. A recent study by the College of Agriculture at the University of Georgia shows that centenarians are more likely to have low body weight than a problem with being overweight. Further studies are planned to determine the predictors and barriers to dairy food consumption by the elderly. **Contact: Mary Ann Johnson (706) 542-2292.**

LOSE WEIGHT AND KEEP IT OFF -- It can be done, says Beth Reames, Extension Service nutritionist with the Louisiana State University. "Overweight people may be better thought of as under-exercisers rather than overeaters," says Reames. Physical activity is the best predictor of long-term weight maintenance. Reames notes that those who diet but do not exercise lose both fat and lean tissue, but dieters who also exercise lose weight mostly as fat. **Contact: Beth Reames (504) 388-4141.**

USDA RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1859 -- Fruit and vegetable growers across the nation are reducing their use of pesticides. On this edition **Brenda Curtis** reviews the innovative methods three farmers are using to cut back chemical use. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME # 1341 -- Programs for nonchemical pest control; be happy with you; an instant community; rural survey; fast food nutrition. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1851 -- USDA news highlights; reorganizing USDA; IPM in the orange groves; U.S. cigarette exports; making money on U.S. agricultural exports. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1604 -- Hormone sterilizes mosquito; microbial mosquito control; mite resistant bees; low input annual medics; insect resistant alfalfa. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Monday, Feb. 1, catfish production, horticultural exports; Tuesday, Feb. 2, cotton and wool update, weekly weather and crop update; Friday, Feb. 5, cattle numbers. These are the **USDA reports we know about in advance**. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

USDA TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Pat O'Leary** reports in a three-part series on farm numbers, and in a feature on the census of agriculture; **DeBoria Janifer** reports on new nutritional labeling of foods; and **Brian Norris** reports on rural health care information.

ACTUALITIES -- Agriculture Secretary **Edward Madigan** on the closing of USDA field offices, and a proposed reorganization of USDA's management structure in Washington.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **Lynn Wyvill** on USDA ethanol research; **DeBoria Janifer** on farm labor; **Pat O'Leary** on agricultural biotechnology; and **Chris Larson** on USDA crop residue management seminars.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update with anchors **Eric Parsons** and **Lori Spiczka**. 4:30 minutes of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

77th STATE FARM SHOW...this month in Harrisburg, PA was covered live by **Martin Grey** (WSBA, York, PA). 4-H and FFA were active participants. Martin says 500,000 people visited the 60 acre show. 14 acres are under roof. Producers had time to attend. Martin says weather has slowed the harvest, there's lots of corn and soybeans in the fields.

NEW VOICE...at WYCM/WBCG, Murfreesboro, NC is farm director **Bill Coleman**. Bill replaces **Sammy Doughtie** who has transferred to sales.

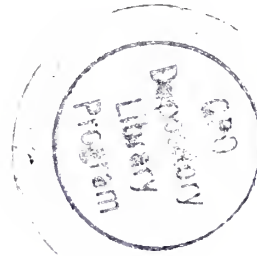
UPDATE...on **Herb Plambeck** (WMT, Cedar Rapids, KRNT Des Moines, IA). Herb was involved in an auto accident last November. He is recuperating in a wheel chair and plans to get back on his feet again. Herb's wife, Laura, has been producing his programs. He says listeners tell him she's much better than he is. He plans to be behind the microphone sometime this month. In the meantime he's been busy writing magazine articles.

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Radio-TV Division
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Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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LIVE COVERAGE...of the Colorado Farm Show in Greeley, CO will be provided by **Tom Ritter** (KFKA, Greeley). Tom says over 200 exhibitors are scheduled for the Jan. 26-28 show.

CONGRATULATIONS...to **Todd Gleason** (WILL, Urbana, IL) who won the top radio award in the 32nd annual Oscars in Agriculture, administered by the University of Illinois. The award recognizes his program on the impact of foreclosure on a farm family. ...to **Brenda Curtis** (USDA radio), selected as one of seven public address system announcers along the inaugural parade route on Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C. ...to **Al Pell** (AgDay, South Bend, IN) whose picture of a TV interview being conducted serves to illustrate the public relations portion of the annual report of the National Corn Growers/National Corn Development Foundation. It serves to show the importance of farm broadcasting in getting agriculture's message to America.

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division